



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Issue 133 – November 6, 2006

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

AOT is kicking off the second installment in our new Arizona Tourism University program, offering a workshop series on "Branding Arizona" beginning November 15. Last year, AOT conducted a branding exercise in conjunction with the Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau that was designed to identify the brand opportunity for Arizona, develop a brand promise and establish brand dimensions. While we have completed this part of the exercise, we are just setting out on the implementation phase, which is where we bring the branding to life in all of our communications. One of the most important parts of the implementation is to share the story of Arizona's brand with our partners around the state, demonstrating how you can leverage this brand and make it work in your community. The "Branding Arizona" workshops will address all of these topics, offering an informative and in-depth look at the concept of branding and how we are using it in Arizona. There is more information about workshop dates and locations below, and I strongly encourage all of you to attend one in your area.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

LAST CHANCE: AOT Presents “Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona” Workshop Series

Please mark your calendars for AOT’s newest workshop series, featuring information from the first full-scale “Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona” report. The economic impact workshops will be held at five locations throughout the state, with each presentation being tailored to the counties that are near that location. The Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona report features county level travel data on each of Arizona’s 15 counties, which will give communities invaluable information on the amount of spending and number of jobs tied to the travel industry in their area. This type of data is vital for communities to explain the value of the travel industry to key stakeholders and secure funding for tourism programs. The workshops will focus on providing communities with methods for using the valuable information in the report to achieve their objectives. Please see below workshop schedule for which counties will be reported at which workshop. To register for a workshop please contact Sarah Martins at smartins@azot.gov or by phone at 602-364-3687.

November 8, 2006
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort
7677 North 16th Street
Phoenix AZ 85020
Counties to be covered: Maricopa and Pinal

AOT Presents “Branding Arizona” Workshop Series

The Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) is proud to present complimentary workshops on "Branding Arizona" at a location near you. Each workshop will cover what a brand is; how AOT is branding Arizona; how the Arizona brand impacts your region; and how you can leverage the Arizona brand to differentiate your products in the marketplace. For more information or to register please contact Sarah Martins at 602-364-3687 or via email at smartins@azot.gov. Workshops will be held in the following locations:

November 15th, 2006
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Little America
2515 East Butler Avenue
Flagstaff, AZ 86004

November 29th, 2006
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Prescott Resort
1500 Hwy 69
Prescott, AZ

December 6, 2006
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Shilo Inn
1550 Castle Dome Ave
Yuma, AZ 85365

December 13th, 2006
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Arizona Historical Society
Board Room
1300 North College Avenue
Tempe, AZ 85281

December 20, 2006
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort and Spa
San Pedro 1
3800 West Starr Boulevard
Tucson, AZ 85745

Melissa Elkins Joins AOT Staff

Melissa Elkins has joined the AOT team as the new Research Manager. She has been in Arizona for three years and prior to joining AOT she was a marketing research analyst for KB Home. Before coming to Arizona, Melissa spent five years working in the tourism industry in New Mexico, holding positions at the Tourism Association of New Mexico and serving as a research analyst for CRC & Associates, a consulting firm that worked with clients within the tourism sector, including the New Mexico Department of Tourism. Melissa holds a Bachelor of Business Administration with a concentration in Travel & Tourism from the University of New Mexico. In her new position at AOT, Melissa will be charged with developing the annual statistical report, compiling the quarterly tourism indicators newsletter, developing regional reports and fulfilling public information requests. Melissa can be reached at melkins@azot.gov or 602-364-3716.

AOT Honored by the Arizona Humanities Council

AOT received the “Friend of the Humanities” award at the Arizona Humanities Council’s annual meeting on October 29 at the Hilton El Conquistador Resort. For the past eight years the Arizona Humanities Council has recognized organizations and individuals that demonstrate an incredible commitment to promoting Arizona’s sense of place and rich history. AOT partnered with the Arizona Humanities Council last year to develop the www.arizonaheritagetraveler.com Web site.

Trippin' with AOT

Trade Show Opportunities

The Arizona Office of Tourism would like to invite you to join us at International Tourismus Boerse (ITB), the largest travel industry trade show in the world. ITB will be held March 7 – 11, 2007 in Berlin, Germany and more than 65,000 trade delegates and 7,000 suppliers from 181 countries are expected to attend. ITB is not an appointment show, however, Arizona’s

representatives in Germany do schedule appointments with German, Austrian and Swiss tour operators and media representatives. Participation fee is \$2,000 for the first delegate and \$500 for the second delegate, plus travel expenses. Please contact Kristy McKinnon at kmckinnon@azot.gov or 602-364-3696 if you are interested in attending.

AOT Staff Present at Flagstaff CVB “Breakfast with the Bureau”

AOT Director of Travel Industry Marketing Mary Rittmann and Director of Media Relations & Communications Jacki Mieler traveled to Flagstaff on Oct. 31 to present at the Flagstaff CVB’s “Breakfast with the Bureau” series. The topic of the day was international marketing and AOT’s presentation focused on current international marketing efforts, in addition to new and emerging markets. AOT also covered the various opportunities that the Flagstaff CVB and its members have to partner with AOT on international marketing efforts. For more information, contact Jacki Mieler at jmieler@azot.gov.

Industry News

Expedia and United Enter Long-Term Partnership

Expedia has entered a new five-year, strategic partnership with United Airlines under which all of United's published fares, schedules and inventory will be available through Expedia.com and its affiliate sites to travelers worldwide. The agreement enables United to benefit from Expedia's online travel expertise, broad reach and targeted merchandising opportunities, and gives Expedia travelers greater access to United's fares, schedules and inventory. United's service to key U.S. domestic and global destinations throughout the Asia-Pacific, Europe and Latin American regions provides Expedia travelers an even greater selection of travel options. (Source: *HotelMarketing.com*)

Leisure Travelers' Online Patterns

According to Gary C. Sain, CMO/Partner of Yesawich, Pepperdine, Brown & Russell, the 2006 YPB&R/Yankelovich National Leisure Travel Monitor[®] shows that more than six in ten leisure travelers use the Internet or an online service to obtain information and prices, a significantly higher proportion than last year. On average, these consumers have done so for more trips this year than last (2.8 vs. 2.4). While the incidence of making a reservation online is unchanged this year compared to the prior 12 months, the average number of trips booked online shows an increase. Among leisure travelers who have used the Internet to make a reservation in the past 12 months, eight in ten made a hotel reservation, two-thirds made an airline reservation, and four in ten made a car reservation online. The incidence of booking a complete vacation package online shows a slight increase – though not a statistically significant one – with nearly one-quarter reporting the behavior. Almost one in ten now book a cruise reservation online.

When searching for hotel or resort accommodations online, approximately seven in ten leisure travelers use online travel agencies, such as Expedia, Travelocity or Priceline. Nearly seven in ten mention using a search engine like Google, Yahoo and MSN. Approximately six in ten search the Web site of a specific hotel chain, and approximately one-half searches the Web site of a specific hotel or resort. Three-quarters of leisure travelers mention using the Web site of an online travel agency as well when searching airfares online – these Web sites are also searched first. A similar proportion, though, uses the Web site of a specific airline – which is searched second. When it comes to searching vacation options online, nearly two-thirds of leisure travelers would use search

engines like Google, Yahoo or MSN. A similar proportion would use the Web site of an online travel agency. Nearly one-half would use the Web site of a specific hotel or hotel chain. Approximately four in ten would search the Web site of a specific national tourist office or destination promotion board. Among technology users who seek information on the Internet, more than one-fourth purport to have visited a blog to review information about a destination or travel service supplier in the last 12 months. (*Source: Internet Travel News*)

Share the Experience Photo Contest

As we enter the holiday season, Americans can help protect our nation's national parks, forests, and public lands by snapping photos highlighting their extraordinary grandeur, according to the U.S. Departments of the Interior and Agriculture. A new photo contest announced recently by Interior agencies—including the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—and the USDA Forest Service will benefit parks and other public lands in several ways. The "Share the Experience" photo contest is sponsored by the National Park Foundation, a Congressionally-authorized foundation and official partner of the National Park Service, and CASIO. It continues through Dec. 31, 2006. Viewers can browse a photo gallery of entries already submitted at www.sharetheexperience.org. The grand prize-winning photo will grace the front of the "America the Beautiful—The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass," a new pass currently under development that will provide access to all participating federal land management agency sites where entrance and standard amenity fees are charged. The new pass will replace the Golden Eagle Passport and National Parks Pass and other federal recreational lands passes. More than 80 percent of pass revenue will help fund facilities and services where the pass was purchased and support vital federal lands projects. More information on the "Share the Experience" photo contest and prizes can be found at www.sharetheexperience.org.

LA finally getting convention hotel

Los Angeles is famous for many things and is the second largest city in the US but it's never been known for its conventions. That is changing, however. Work is underway to remove the city from being the only one in the US that does not have a hotel connected to its convention center. Ground was broken last summer on a 1,000-room Ritz-Carlton and a JW Marriott adjacent to the Los Angeles Convention Center. The \$750 million project will involve some of the largest buildings in Los Angeles. The entire project is expected to open in 2010. There's also a spate of hotel renovations in the area. In the past, convention-goers have had to take a bus to their hotels.

International Visits to U.S. up 7% in August

Some 4.6 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. in August, an increase of 7% over August 2005, according to figures released Wednesday by the Office of Travel and Tourism Industries in the Commerce Department. Visitation to the U.S. was up 5% for the first eight months of the year, compared to the same period in 2005. Overseas arrivals, excluding Canada and Mexico, are down 1% through August. Canadian visitation is up 8% for the month and 6% for the year. Arrivals from Mexico among those traveling to interior U.S. points, were up a robust 26% for the year. Arrivals from Western Europe showed no growth in August and were down 4% for the year. Details at 202-482-0140. (*Special to TA*)